

Title: Immigrant, Refugee, and Community Health and Integration in Utah

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Abstract

Despite the fact that immigrants, refugees, and non-immigrants live and work together, researchers and policymakers continue to study and support these groups in isolation. This differentiation between groups is especially significant with regard to integration; integration includes economic, social, cultural, and political participation, and it shapes many facets of migrants' lives, including health. We propose to measure and understand integration and community change in Utah through a multi-site, multi-perspective, mixed-methods evaluation that includes input from immigrants, refugees, and US-born Utah residents. Utah is a unique case to enhance our understanding of immigrant and refugee integration processes and health outcomes because of its recent migration history and its unusual socio-political climate. Utah is a new immigrant destination, with significant immigrant and refugee populations settled in communities throughout the state over the past thirty years. It also has a number of "immigrant friendly" policies designed to support immigrant and refugee integration. But public sentiment among Utah's super-majority white, US-citizen population often does not align with these immigrant-friendly policies. This mismatch between policy and public sentiment has created an ideal context for examining how social, legal, and political conditions shape integration outcomes, including health, employment, and social wellbeing. In this moment of heightened tension around immigration and refugee reception in the US, we seek to understand the macro-and micro-level processes that shape immigrant, refugee, and non-immigrant perceptions of integration, inclusion, community change, and health. Findings will contribute to key academic debates and support positive community change as we partner with policymakers and community leaders to better address their constituents' social, physical, and emotional needs.